

“THE JOY OF GOD”

INTRODUCTION: In each of the Ten Commandments, we learn wonderful things about God...

1. Rather than a mere **list** of do’s and don’t’s, the Decalogue is a reflection of God’s character imaged in us:

a. Notice how God introduces the Ten Commandments...

i. Exodus 19:21-25 emphasizes the *holiness* of God (an unapproachable God)

And the Lord said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to look and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.” And Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.’” And the Lord said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break out against them.” So Moses went down to the people and told them. (Exo. 19:21-25)

And God spoke all these words, saying,

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” (Exodus 20:1-2)

ii. Deuteronomy 5:1-6 emphasizes the *love* (God and His covenant of grace with Israel).

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Deuteronomy 5:1-6)

b. Both versions begin with a unique statement:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Exodus 20:2)

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Deuteronomy 5:6)

- c. God is saying: “I am the *YAHWEH* your God who delivered you from bondage in Egypt and the law will tell you what I am like and what I expect from you who are made in My image.”
2. I offer evidence for this interpretation of the law by pointing to **Leviticus 19:1-36**.
 - a. Laws about honoring parents, offerings to God, providing for the poor, stealing, honesty in business, justice in courts of law, brotherly love, farming, sexual immorality, horticulture, dietary restrictions, prostitution, Sabbath keeping, witchcraft, caring for strangers and fairness in economics...
 - b. Each section ending with these words: “...*I am the Lord*.”
 - c. Thirteen times God says: “*I am the Lord*” (*Yahweh*) or “*I am the Lord your God*”...
 - d. *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. (Leviticus 19:1-2)*
 - e. **i.e., I am the Lord your God and these laws of Mine reflect who I am and what I am like.**
 3. Hence, this is the *primary purpose* of the law: to reveal to us the nature of God and to guide us in our conduct and character development so that we reflect God’s holy and loving nature in our lives and lifestyles.
 4. **James I. Packer:** *Growing in Christ* (p. 263 f.f.)

When God gave Israel the Commandments on Sinai, He introduced them by introducing Himself, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of...bondage.’ What God is and has done determines what His people must be and do. So study of the Decalogue should start by seeing what it tells us about God. First, He is the God of creation and covenant. The fourth commandment says that He made heaven, earth, sea, “and all that is in them” (verse 11). You and I and everything else exist, then, not independently, but by God’s will and power. “The Lord” is “Yahweh” (Jehovah), the proper name by which God wanted the Israelites to know Him. “Yahweh” is God’s covenant name, and Scripture compares His covenant to the man’s commitment in marriage: a free, deliberate undertaking to love, protect, and provide for the one whom He calls “my wife” and to whom He presents Himself as “your husband.” Creation and covenant together give God a double claim on our obedience. Second, God is redeemer and rewarder. The God who redeemed Jews from Egyptian slavery has redeemed Christians from bondage to sin and Satan at the cost of Calvary. Third, God is jealous, and judges. His jealousy is not a moral flaw, as the word might suggest, but a moral excellence; it is the jealousy of a loyal husband who rightly desires his wife’s exclusive affection. Where God’s love is spurned, his will flouted, and his loyalty betrayed, he can be expected to “visit” as judge.
 5. How we are approaching each of the Ten Commandments *must* reflect this truth about God’s revelation of Himself in each commandment.
 6. If we do not approach the commandments this way, then we invite trouble:
 - a. They become *impossible rules* which we cannot keep...
 - b. They lead us to think that behavior is more important than *character*.
 - c. They rob us of the *Christ-centered* essence of each commandment.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)

- d. They shield us from *grace* in order to keep the law.
- e. They become *odious* in our sight.

7. Listen to the Apostles as they speak about the law of God and the commandments (Paul and John)...

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (Romans 7:7-12)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:1-3)

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

8. So, let us begin this way in examining each of the Ten Commandments...

- a. **First:** Each one reflects the beauty, the balance, and the blessedness of our God.
- b. **Second:** Each one points to the saving, the sanctifying and the satisfying person and work of Christ.
- c. **Third:** Each one promises a rich blessing for those who obey them.
- d. **Fourth:** Each one informs us how we can love God and love other people through repentance, faith and obedience.

9. We turn now to the **Fourth Commandment** and the longest of all Ten Commandments: *Keeping the Sabbath Holy*...

- a. In the Deuteronomy version, there are 383 words in the *English Standard Version* of the Decalogue
 - i. Introduction = 21 words
 - ii. Commandment #4 (Sabbath) = 135 words
 - iii. Commandment #2 (Idolatry) = 90 words
 - iv. Other 8 commandments = 136 words
- b. So...the two commandments on *Idolatry* (30%) and *Sabbath Keeping* (35%) comprise 65% of the Decalogue.

- c. Discounting the introduction (which is not a commandment) the law on the Sabbath makes up 38% of the Decalogue.
 - d. The commandment on the Sabbath equals that of all the other commandments (minus the second on idolatry)
10. The version of the Decalogues in Exodus is shorter: a total of 324 words.
- a. The Fourth Commandment = 97 words
 - b. A total of 30% of the Decalogue
 - c. Discounting the introduction = 32%, or one-third of the actual commands.
11. **Please note:** When we divide the Ten Commandments into the “two tables of the law,” we find an interesting fact:
- a. Laws 1-4...our duty to God = **72%** of the law!
 - b. Laws 5-10...our duty to men = **28%** of the law!
 - c. *I do not believe that I am merely playing with numbers but rather I am pointing to the weight and emphasis of God’s Law...*
12. The fourth Commandment is the *only* commandment to come in two versions. The Exodus version and the Deuteronomy version differ in the last sentence...
- a. The reason *why* we keep the Sabbath holy...
 - b. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)*
 - c. *Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)*
13. Let us look at this most precious commandment.

I. GOD IS ONE TO BE ENJOYED

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:11)

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)

A. God is a God of Balance

1. I believe the fourth commandment tells us **four things** that are true about God and worthy of celebration...
2. **First:** *God is a God of Balance; He both works and He rests.*
3. The Exodus 20 version tells us this:
 - a. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)*
 - b. God created the world in six days = *His divine work week.*
 - c. On the Seventh Day, He stopped creating = *He rested from His work.*
 - d. *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)*
4. Was God “tired”? No. God cannot get tired. He is infinitely omnipotent. He possesses limitless energy, life and power.

*Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)*

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep. (Psalm 121:1-4)*

5. Why then did God rest? *To set an example for us and to **institute** the Sabbath Day for mankind...*

- a. God worked for six days (work week)
- b. God then *created/instituted* the Sabbath
- c. This is the **rhythm of life**: work and rest

6. **God knew that the entire creation needed this divine rhythm of life – work and rest.**

- a. So He instituted a series of “Sabbaths”
- b. *Sabbath* means “rest”
- c. A weekly Sabbath: The Lord’s Day
- d. A Sabbath rest for the land every 7 years: the Sabbatical year

The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land. The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and the sojourner who lives with you, and for your cattle and for the wild animals that are in your land: all its yield shall be for food. (Leviticus 25:1-7)

- e. The Year of Jubilee: every 50 years: $7 \times 7 = 49$ years, then a year of Jubilee.

“You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field.

“In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. You shall pay your neighbor according to the number of years after the jubilee, and he shall sell to you according to the number of years for crops. If the years are many,

you shall increase the price, and if the years are few, you shall reduce the price, for it is the number of the crops that he is selling to you. You shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God, for I am the LORD your God.

“Therefore you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them, and then you will dwell in the land securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely. And if you say, ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year, if we may not sow or gather in our crop?’ I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating some of the old crop; you shall eat the old until the ninth year, when its crop arrives. (Lev. 25:8-22)

- f. A Sabbath every 7 days, every 7 years and every 7x7 years: *the Lord's Day, the Sabbatical year, and the Jubilee.*

7. God is a God of balance – work and rest – and this rhythm of balance is built into His creation order.

B. God is a God of Beauty

1. God rested on the 7th day of creation in order to *enjoy* the goodness and beauty of His work (creation).

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Gen. 1:31)

2. God took time to stop and “smell the roses” He had just made.
3. When we stop and enjoy creation, we naturally *worship God*.
4. Exodus 20:11 tells us that this is the first reason for the Sabbath Day: *to worship God as Creator*.
5. God does *not* just “do things” for His creatures. He expects them to rest, draw back from work, slow down from busyness and **enjoy Him** – worship!
6. *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.* (Westminster Shorter Catechism #1)
7. Life in the world is designed by God for all angels, people, animals and creation to stop and give Him glory for what He has done and enjoy life with Him.
8. **To fail to do so leads to idolatry, neglect of worship and a profaning of God's name.**
(Commandments 1-3)

C. God is a God of Redemption

1. This is the reason Deuteronomy 6:15 gives for the Sabbath Day –
 - a. *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:15)*
 - b. Rescue and Redemption from Egypt
 - c. Redemption from the bondage and slavery to sin

2. When the redeemed stop to celebrate their salvation in Christ, their hearts are filled with *gratitude*.
3. The Scripture speaks repeatedly about “*the songs of the redeemed*,” admission to the fact that God is worthy of our adoration, praise and gratitude for the saving work of Christ.

D. God is a God of Covenant

1. He exists in a community called *The Trinity*, in an eternal covenant of love and faithfulness (between Father, Son and Spirit)
2. His Sabbath Day is a **sign of the covenant** between Him and those in the covenant of grace: the Church
 - a. *And the Lord said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’” And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:12-18)*
 - b. *The Lord said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. (Ex. 34:1-2)*
 - c. *And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. (Exodus 34:10)*
 - d. *Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. (Exodus 34:21)*
 - e. *And the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:27-28)*
3. **One of the marks of the people of God is that they keep the Sabbath Holy** – they rest, they go to church and worship, they celebrate redemption, they gather together to renew their covenant with God.

4. People say, *“I can worship God on Sunday just as well in a fishing boat, on a golf course or on my screened-in porch with a cup of coffee, as I can in church.*
 - a. **No...you cannot!** Not according to God.
 - b. You were not created to be alone but for community.
 - c. You were not redeemed alone but into community.
 - d. You did not enter into a covenant of God alone but in community.
 - e. You don’t live your life, Monday to Saturday, alone but in community.
5. **God’s covenant of grace and way of life is built around two communities:** *The community of the Trinity and the community of the church.*
 - a. Life with God in the Country of the Trinity.
 - b. Life with God the Father in Creation (work)
 - c. Life with God the Son in Redemptive History (redemption)
 - d. Life with God the Spirit in Community (church)
 - e. **Work...witness...worship**
6. **And Jesus Christ lies at the very center of this Sabbath ordinance...**

II. CHRIST IS OUR SABBATH REST

A. Jesus Christ is our eternal Sabbath

1. As each commandment does, the fourth commandment points us to Jesus Christ.
2. *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.* (Galatians 3:24)
3. The New Testament informs us that Jesus is our great Sabbath Rest. **(Hebrews 4:1-16)**
Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,
“As I swore in my wrath,
‘They shall not enter my rest,’”
although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”
And again in this passage he said,
“They shall not enter my rest.”

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

*"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."*

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:1-16)

4. Here is what the author of Hebrews is saying: *When we put our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, we enter the rest of God from all life's laborious burdens...*
 - a. We rest **in** Christ for our righteousness and our acceptance with God.
 - b. We rest **from** the fruitless efforts to save our own souls by religious duty or dead works.
 - c. We rest **with** all the Old Testament and New Testament saints of history who found redemption in Jesus.
 - d. We rest **by means of** the work Jesus did to save us.
 - e. We rest **through** the High Priest Jesus who enters into heaven to pray for us, take our worship to God and cleanse us from spiritual defilement.
 - f. We rest **in spite of** our human weakness, our spiritual fatigue and our sinful blunderings...

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:14-16)

5. **Each and every Lord's Day (Sabbath Day/Sunday) is a day that calls us to faith in Christ, to rest in His grace, to refreshment by His Spirit and to the hearing of His Word.**

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb. 4:11-12)

6. Every Sunday points to Jesus Christ: This is why we call it “*The Lord’s Day*”

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. (Rev. 1:9-10)

B. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath

1. *And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27-28)*
2. Jesus did not *eliminate* the Sabbath Day for Christians; He *renewed* it! He did so in **three ways...**
 - a. **First:** Jesus, His Apostles and His early church “religiously” (consistently/regularly) kept the Sabbath. Jesus went to church on the Sabbath; so should we.
 - b. **Second:** Jesus redeemed the Sabbath Day from the burden of the laborious rules of the rabbis that made the Sabbath a joyless drudgery.
 - c. **Third:** Jesus led His Apostles to change the Christian Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday in order to commemorate and celebrate His resurrection.
3. **Forget the myth:** *Jesus was no anti-establishment hippie who stayed away from the synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath just to flaunt grace and make the point that He didn’t need the church to be happy.*
4. **Please take note of Luke 4:16**
 - a. “...as was His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day...”
 - b. Greek: *ethō*: custom, practice, habit; to be accustomed to doing; a regular pattern of behavior
 - c. *It was Jesus’ custom/habit/practice to go to church on the Sabbath – rest, worship, enjoy God and fellowship with the church, to preach, teach and hear God’s Word.*
5. **Here is the best rationale for why Christians keep the Sabbath: Jesus did so!**
 - a. Worship in *morning* and *evening* services!
 - b. Evening: *Friday evening*
 - c. Morning: *Saturday morning*
 - d. *A day set apart for God and His people*

III. CHRISTIANS ARE PEOPLE OF THE SABBATH

A. What the Sabbath Day Prescribes

1. What does this fourth commandment require of us?

The fourth commandment requires of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called the Lord's day. (Westminster Larger Catechism #116)

2. Now, how exactly do we hallow the Sabbath?
 - a. *The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to betaken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day. (Westminster Larger Catechism #117)*
 - b. Rest from regular work (employment)
 - c. Refrain from “worldly recreations” lawful Monday to Saturday (e.g. a round of golf)
 - d. Avoidance of unnecessary domestic work (e.g., lawn moving, house-cleaning, etc.)
 - e. Rejoicing in the Sabbath (not begrudgingly)
 - f. Corporate worship in the church: morning and evening
 - g. Ministries of mercy and caring (e.g., visiting the sick or shut-ins)
 - h. Order our week to free the Lord's Day for worship and rest
3. *“If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isaiah 58:13-14)*
4. **Please note:** *Keeping the Sabbath begins with the proper attitude: The Lord's Day is a delight!*

B. What the Sabbath Day forbids

1. *The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations. (WCL #119)*
2. **In short:** turning the Lord's Day into just another day like all the rest (except for an hour on Sunday morning from 11:00 a.m. until noon!)

3. Again: the key is **attitude** about your time!
4. **Note:** *Genesis 1-2 inform us that God created **time:** seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, seasons, years, decades, centuries, epochs and eras, millennia. **And all this time belongs to God, not to us!***

My times are in your hand... (Psalm 31:15)

5. When we abuse time, we suffer just as surely as if we would if we abused any other of God's created gifts.
6. **James I. Packer:** *Growing In Christ (p. 281)*

The underlying principle is clear—namely, that we must honor God not only by our loyalty (first commandment) and thought-life (second commandment) and word (third commandment), but also by our use of time, in a rhythm of toil and rest; six days for work crowned by one day for worship. God's claim on our sabbaths reminds us that all our time is His gift, to be given back to Him and used for Him. This is where true obedience to the fourth commandment begins.

CONCLUSION: I leave you with a thought which I would ask you to think about, mull over and discuss...

1. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, state after state began to repeal **Blue Laws:** laws that prohibited commerce, retail, civic work and some entertainment on Sundays.
2. In rapid succession, laws regulating marriage, prayer in schools, the sanctity of life, adultery, pornography, displays of religion in public places, homosexuality and heterosexual marriage began to fall like dominos.
3. **Do you think this was coincidental or is there a link and progression between Sabbath keeping and moral living?**
4. **Here's my take on it:** *Ignore the Sabbath and you remove God from your week. Remove God from your week and you remove God from your daily lives. Remove God from daily life and you remove God from life's institutions. Remove God from civic and commercial institutions and you remove God from culture. Remove God from the culture and you remove God from society. Remove God from society and everything falls apart...rapidly.*
5. There is a flow of godliness and blessing in these first four commandments:
 - a. God is first in our hearts, minds and lives (#1)
 - b. God is to be approached as He so prescribes. We concoct no false ideas of God in our souls (#2)
 - c. God, and everything about Him is worthy of reverence (#3)
 - d. A day is set aside to rest in God, enjoy Him, worship Him and serve Him (#4)

- e. **When we have low views of God, do not revere Him and consider Him an inconvenience, a drudgery and a boring duty, then we have a god who is false (an idol), and as a result this god's day is a joyless burden to us.**
6. **“Remember to keep the Sabbath Day holy...”** Because we tend to forget God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God of Community, God of time, God of our lives. And we forget how gracious, good, great and glorious – how delightful – He really is!
7. **The best thing the church could do for our children, our community and our country is to once again call the Sabbath a delight and to keep the Lord's Day sacred!**

*“If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isa. 58:13-14)*